Met Office

NEWS

A windy weekend ahead for southern Britain

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An intense low pressure system is forecast to affect southern Britain on Saturday.

A Yellow wind warning has already been issued for strong southwesterly winds on Saturday from 4am covering parts of southern England and South and West Wales.

Chief Forecaster Frank Saunders said: “A very deep area of low pressure is expected to bring strong winds to southern areas early on Saturday morning. During the morning and early afternoon these winds will transfer east and slowly change direction as they will become westerly and eventually northwesterly toward the end of the warning period.

“Gusts exceeding 50 mph are expected widely within the warning area, with gusts of around 70 mph along exposed coastal areas. These are expected to coincide with high tides, leading to locally dangerous conditions.”

The system – which hasn't been named – will undergo a rapid deepening far out in the Atlantic. However, by the time it reaches Britain and Ireland it is expected to be weakening, but it will still be a deep low, bringing strong winds with the potential to affect travel over the weekend. The Met Office and Met Éireann will continue to review the situation ahead of the system's arrival.

As the system is expected to bring strong gusts during Saturday, there is the obvious potential of risk to travellers. RAC spokesman Pete Williams said: "Drivers encountering high winds are advised to reduce their speed, ensure they hold the steering wheel firmly and be prepared for sudden gusts, debris and even fallen branches in the road. Allow plenty of room between your vehicle and the next and take extra care when overtaking cyclists, motorcyclists and lorries as they are susceptible to being blown around easily by side winds. Be extra cautious when driving on exposed roads, high ground and across bridges where again sudden gusts can blow you off course.

"When you reach your destination consider parking safely avoiding trees, overhanging telephone wires and things which could represent a falling danger."

The strongest winds in coastal areas, gusting up to 70mph, are expected to coincide with high tides, leading to potentially dangerous conditions for local coastal communities.

Alison Baptiste, National flood duty manager for the Environment Agency, said: "Strong winds along the south coast on Friday and into Saturday will coincide with high tides. This is likely to cause large waves and spray which could lead to some minor coastal flooding on the south coast.

"We urge people to stay safe along the coast and warn against putting yourself in unnecessary danger by taking 'storm selfies' or driving through flood water – just 30cm is enough to move your car.

"Environment Agency teams are on the ground checking defences and taking precautionary measures such as closing tidal gates. We're working with partners including the Met Office and local authorities to monitor the situation and are ready to respond as necessary."

The system is typical for the time of year and it has developed mainly as a result of a contrast in temperatures either side of the jet stream, with cooler temperatures to the north and warm temperatures to the south. Ex-Ophelia which affected Ireland and Britain on Monday and Tuesday had a different origin as it developed from a hurricane in the tropical Atlantic.

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